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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 007147

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR WITH NEW JUSTICE MINISTER: AID,
EXTRADITION, CHILD CUSTODY

REF: AMMAN 4849

Classified By: Ambassador E. Gnehm for reason 1.5 d

Justice Ministry Needs Money

1. (C) Ambassador, AID Country Director, AID officer and PolOff made an October 28 courtesy call on new Justice Minister Salah al-Bashir. Bashir requested that AID participate in the meeting and used the courtesy call as a platform to seek financial assistance for his judicial reform plans. Explaining his broad vision for a human rights and democratization agenda in the Ministry, he sought quick AID assistance for an urgent initial research and strategy phase, and also for the later implementation phase. Referring to recent polling data (reported reftel) that suggests only a 60% approval rating of the judicial system, he stated that the rate should be higher and sees his plan leading to the building of "an inclusive pillar for (Jordanian) state and society."

2. (C) Bashir mentioned a number of costs facing his ministry--including infrastructure, personnel, and training--that cannot be met by the Jordanian budget. While he reviewed the status of AID, MEPI, and PASA funding, the Ambassador clearly pointed out that Bashir's ambitious plans would also be hard for the USG to fund, especially as quickly as he would like. AID offered to look into assisting with the early stage of the research and strategy phase, and post is coordinating a response to the Minister's request.

Extradition, Child Custody

3. (C) The Ambassador also urged the new government to submit the bilateral extradition treaty to parliament for ratification. Both agreed that a change in political conditions since the time when it was rejected by the Jordanian higher court could now lead to its acceptance. The ambassador brought the draft child custody MOU to his attention, which Bashir promised to review and comment on at a later date.

GNEHM